

Case/Docket No. TRANS34
Express Mail No.EK380384376US

THE HONORABLE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of:

Inventors: Sameer Halepete, H. Peter Anvin, Zongjian Chen, Godfrey P. D'Souza, Marc Fleischmann, Keith Klayman, Thomas Lawrence, and Andrew Read

For: ADAPTIVE POWER CONTROL

Enclosed are:

- XXX FOUR (4) sheet(s) of Formal Drawing(s) including FOUR (4) figures.
An Assignment of the invention to: Transmeta Corporation.
XXX A Declaration and Power of Attorney.
A Verified Statement to establish Small Entity Status under 37 CFR 1.9 and 37 CFR 1.27.
XXX Return addressed stamped postcard.

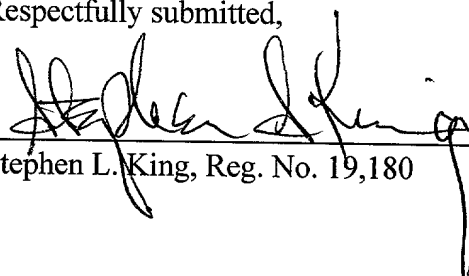
The Filing Fee has been calculated as shown below:

	(Col. 1)	(Col.2)	SMALL ENTITY		OTHER THAN A SMALL ENTITY	
For:	No. Filed	No. Extra	RATE	FEE	RATE	FEE
Basic Fee:	-	-	-	\$380.00	-	\$760.00
Total Claims:	-11	-0-	x \$9.00		x \$18.00	-0-
Indep. Claims:	-4	-0-	x \$39.00		x \$78.00	-0-
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Dep. Claim(s) Presented			+ \$130.00	39	+ \$260.00	-0-
* If the difference in (Col. 1) is less than zero, enter "0" in (Col. 2)			Total:	\$419.00	Total:	\$0.00

XXX A check in the amount of \$420.00 is enclosed to cover the filing fee..

Respectfully submitted,

Date: Jan 18, 2000


Stephen L. King, Reg. No. 19,180

30 Sweetbay Road
Rancho Palos Verdes, California 90275
(310) 377-5073

Our Ref: Trans34

APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

FOR

ADAPTIVE POWER CONTROL

Inventors:

Sameer Halepete
H. Peter Anvin
Zongjian Chen
Godfrey P. D'Souza
Marc Fleischmann
Keith Klayman
Thomas Lawrence
Andrew Read

Prepared by:

Stephen L. King
30 Sweetbay Road
Rancho Palos Verdes, California 90275
(310) 377-5073

Express Mail Label No. EK380384367US

00370-9T3450

ADAPTIVE POWER CONTROL

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field Of The Invention

This invention relates to computer systems and, more particularly, to
5 methods for varying the amount of power used by such systems during
use of the systems.

History Of The Prior Art

A significant problem faced by battery powered computers is the length
of time such computers are capable of operating between charges. As
10 computer processors become more capable, they tend to run at faster
speeds and dissipate more power. At the same time, the size and weight
of portable computers is constantly being reduced to make them more
portable. Since batteries tend to be a very significant element of the
weight of portable computers and other portable devices, the tendency
15 has been to maintain their size and thus their capacity at a minimum.

A typical portable computer today has an average life of approximately
two and one-half hours until its originally-full battery must be recharged.

A great deal of research has been directed to ways for extending the
operating life of portable computers. Presently, typical processors
20 include circuitry and software for disabling various power-draining
functions of portable computers when those functions are unused for
some extensive period. For example, various techniques have been
devised for turning off the screen when it has not been used for some

selected period. Similar processes measure the length of time between use of hard drives and disable rotation after some period. Another of these processes is adapted to put a central processor into a quiescent condition after some period of inactivity.

5 In general, these processes are useful in extending the operating life of a portable computer. However, the life still does not extend significantly beyond two and one-half hours for any computer having significant capabilities.

There has been a significant amount of research conducted from which processor requiring less power might be produced. Most processors used in computer systems today are made using CMOS technology. The power consumed by a CMOS integrated circuit is given approximately by $P = CV^2f$, where C is the active switching capacitance, V is the supply voltage, and f is the frequency of operation. The maximum allowable frequency is described by $f_{\max} = kV$, where k is a constant.

It is desirable to operate the processor at the lowest possible voltage at a frequency that provides the computing power desired by the user at any given moment. For instance, if the processor is operating at 600 MHz, and the user suddenly runs a compute-intensive process half as demanding, the frequency can be dropped by a factor of two. This means that the voltage can also be dropped by a factor of two. Therefore, power consumption is reduced by a factor of eight. Various methods of implementing this dynamic voltage-frequency scaling have been described in the prior art. All of these involve a component separate from the processor on the system that provides multiple frequencies to

multiple system components. Also, they involve state-machines or power-management units on the system to coordinate the voltage-frequency changes. The efficiency of voltage frequency scaling is reduced when the frequency generator is not on the processor. Having a separate power-management unit increases the number of components in the system and the power dissipated by the system. It is also desirable to have the processor control both the voltage it receives and the frequency it receives. As the level of integration increases in processors, they control most of the system clocks; and it is desirable to provide control to the processor to change these clocks so they can be run at just the right frequency. Having a separate clock generator that produces multiple frequencies is not desirable because of the lack of tight coupling.

It is desirable to increase significantly the operating life of portable computers and similar devices.

Summary Of The Invention

It is, therefore, an object of the present invention to increase significantly the operating life of portable computers.

This and other objects of the present invention are realized by a method for controlling the power used by a computer including the steps of utilizing control software to measure the operating characteristics of a processor of the computer, determining when the operating characteristics of the central processor are significantly different than required by the operations being conducted, and changing the operating characteristics of the central processor to a level commensurate with the operations being conducted.

These and other objects and features of the invention will be better understood by reference to the detailed description which follows taken together with the drawings in which like elements are referred to by like designations throughout the several views.

Brief Description Of The Drawings

Figure 1 is a block diagram of various hardware components of a computer system utilized in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 2 is a flow chart illustrating the operation of one embodiment of the invention.

Figure 3 illustrates a number of registers utilized in the hardware components of the system shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a block diagram illustrating the operation of sequencer circuitry which is a part of a processor illustrated in the system of Figure 1.

Detailed Description

Figure 1 is a block diagram of various hardware components of a computer system utilized in accordance with the present invention to control the operating frequency and voltage of the system. The hardware includes a processor 10, a clock generator 11, a programmable voltage generator 12, system memory (DRAM) 14, and an external battery (or other power supply) 13. The processor 10, clock generator 11, and voltage generator 12 are all mounted to a circuit board 15 in a manner known to those skilled in the art. The battery 13 and system memory 14

may be electrically connected to the circuit board in a number of possible ways known to those skilled in the art.

The processor 10 includes on the same semiconductor chip a number of components including a processing unit 16 and a programmable

5 frequency generator 17. The processor 10 also typically includes a number of other components which are known to those skilled in the art but are not pertinent to the present invention and are therefore not illustrated. The processing unit 16 includes a number of logical

10 components including a master control unit 18 which is the central portion for accomplishing clock and voltage control. In the present invention, the master control unit 18 also includes circuitry for

monitoring the operating characteristics of the processor. Various monitoring functions (such as circuitry for accomplishing voltage and frequency monitoring) which are well known to the prior art are included

15 as a part of the logical master control unit 18. The logical unit 18 may also include circuitry for making available additional information detected by other portions of the computer system in either analogue or digital form (e.g., temperature data). The logical unit 18 also includes circuitry for detecting other operations of the system including

20 commands to be executed from which a particular type of operation to be executed may be determined. A detailed discussion of circuitry for providing various operating characteristics is included in U. S. patent application serial number 09/417,930, entitled Programmable Event Counter System, B. Coon et al, filed October 13, 1999, and assigned to
25 the assignee of the present application.

The programmable frequency generator 17 receives an external frequency often referred to as a "slow clock" from the external clock generator 11.

The generator 17 responds to values furnished by control software executing on the processor to produce from the slow clock a core clock for operation of the processing unit 16, one or more clocks for operation of the various system memory components shown as system memory 14 in the figure, the system bus, and any other components which might utilized a separate clock.

It should be specifically noted that contrasted to prior art systems, the programmable frequency generator is able to provide individual frequencies selectable for each of these components. Thus, prior art arrangements utilize an external clock generator to provide all of the different frequencies utilized by the system. This has a number of effects which are less than desirable. Since the clocks are generated off-chip, the time needed to change frequency is long. Since in an integrated processor all clocks are created from a single slow clock off chip, if the core frequency changes all of the frequencies change with it. Thus, a frequency furnished a single component cannot be changed without affecting a change in other frequencies. The voltage furnished by the external clock generator does not change even though reduced frequencies adapted to provide reduced levels of operations are furnished for various components of the system. A number of other factors slow the response of the system to changes in the various clocks when an external clock is used to generate the various operating frequencies for a system.

A system may utilize a plurality of interfaces between the processing unit and system memory in order to provide different operating frequencies for system memory which is being utilized. The present invention allows this to be easily accomplished by utilizing different divisors to obtain
5 different values from which the operating frequencies for different system memory units are determined. As will be noted in the following discussion, two different memory frequencies as utilized and more are possible.

Thus, by utilizing the phase-lock-loop generator 17 to determine a core
10 clock frequency and dividing that frequency by a plurality of different values determined by the control software, the operating frequencies for the different components of the system may be individually controlled and furnished to other components of the processor without the necessity of crossing chip boundaries with the consequent slowing
15 caused by negotiating the boundaries.

In order to allow the master control unit 18 to accomplish these operations, the processing unit 16 includes a number of registers which are utilized by the control software and the hardware. These include a master control register 20, a master status register 21, and a master
20 clock divider register 22 which are illustrated in Figure 3.

Of these registers, the clock divider register 22 stores, among other things, the multiplier computed by the control software for generating the core frequency, the value used as a divisor to obtain the bus frequency from the core frequency, a value used as a divisor to obtain a
25 first system memory frequency from the core frequency, and a value used

as a divisor to obtain a second system memory frequency from the core frequency. In addition, the clock divider register 22 stores values used for various other including an indication that a frequency change command has been received.

5 The master control register includes values pertinent to the present description including the voltage which is to be furnished to the processor as a part of the change of frequency. This register also stores a value indicating the time period allowed for accomplishing the phase-lock-loop relock operation. The master status register also stores the
10 various values used as dividers and the value used as a multiplier to obtain the core frequency along with other significant information.

The various values stored in these registers are utilized, among other things, to control the operations of sequencer circuitry (illustrated in Figure 4) which carries out the operations necessary to changing the
15 frequency at which the components of the system operate. The sequencer circuitry carries out the series of steps required by which the phase-lock-loop circuitry is brought to the new frequency and relocked after the processor clock has been shut off.

The operations carried out by the sequencer commence at an idle state
20 which represents the normal condition of the sequencer in the absence of a frequency change operation. When the change frequency command and values are received, the sequencer steps from the idle condition to first shut down the core clock and the clocks to the various memory interfaces. The sequencer then waits a few cycles before shutting down
25 the bus clock, the master control clock, and saving information sufficient

to assure that timing during and after the sequencing is correct. After this delay, the sequencer starts a counter to time the phase-lock-loop relock process. When this count is complete, the sequencer wakes the bus and the master control units. Finally, the sequencer wakes up the core and memory interfaces and awaits another frequency changing operation. The relation of the sequencer to the control software will be described in detail in the discussion of the process of the control software which follows.

Figure 2 is a flow chart representing the process carried out by one embodiment of the invention. In the figure, the steps described in the left column represent operations accomplished by the control software, while the steps described in the right column represent operations accomplished by the cooperating hardware.

In a first step, the control software monitors various conditions of the processor which relate to power expenditure by the processor. These conditions may include any of those described above including the present frequency and voltage of operation, the temperature of operation, the amount of time the processor spends in one of what may be a number of idle states in which various components of the system are quiescent. For example, if the processor is running in what might be termed its normal mode of operation at a core frequency of 400 MHz. and a voltage of 1.3 volts, the control software may be monitoring the amount of time the processor spends in the "halt" state, the amount of time the processor spends in the "deep sleep" state, and the temperature of the processor. The deep sleep state is a state in which power is furnished only to the processor and to DRAM memory. In this state, the processor

At a next step, the software reviews the values computed and determines whether the frequency is to be increased. If the frequency is to be increased, it is first necessary that the voltage be increased to allow the processor to function at a higher frequency. In such a case, it is first
5 necessary to increase the voltage level of operation. The typical power supplies offer a number of pins (often five) by which different operating voltages may be selected. This allows a range of different voltages to be provided. Consequently, the control software simply furnishes a correct value on the input pins of the power supply to cause the computed
10 voltage to be furnished to the frequency generator and to the processor. In one embodiment, the voltage increase is accomplished by providing a level to be reached and a time period for the voltage to settle to this level.

It should be noted that the voltage may be increased in a single step, an action which would typically cause phase-locked-loop circuitry of a
15 frequency generator to lose its lock and would create a large surge of current causing the currently-available voltage regulator circuitry to initiate a system reset. This problem may be eliminated with future voltage regulator circuitry. Alternatively, the voltage may be increased in a series of small steps which would not have this effect. For example, if
20 increases of approximately 50 millivolts are enabled, then the frequency generator will remain stable during the voltage increase and a system reset will not occur. This offers the advantage that the processor may continue to execute commands during the period in which the voltage change is taking place.

25 If the control software was not increasing but rather decreasing frequency of operation at the previous step, then the original voltage level

is not changed at this time. In either case, the control software then goes through a sequence of steps in which various operations of the processor are prepared for shutdown so that the system clocks can be changed. With a particular processor such as that referred to in the patent application described above, this includes flushing a gated store buffer, suspending bus and direct memory access (DMA) operations, and enabling self-refreshing circuitry for system DRAM memory.

With these processor operations shut down, the control software transfers the new divider values and writes a bit indicating a frequency change is to occur. The hardware stores the divider values in the clock divider register and the change frequency indicator. This starts the hardware process of the sequencer. The control software then writes "stop core," "stop DRAM0" and "stop DRAM1" bits of the master command register to stop the clocks being furnished to these components.

Writing the master control register bits to stop the clock frequencies and the values to the hardware causes the hardware to commence the remainder of the frequency changing operation utilizing the sequencer circuitry described above. At this point, the software effectively goes into a wait state which continues until the core clock is enabled at the new frequency. The sequencer responds to the command by shutting down the core clock and the DRAM memory interfaces. The sequencer pauses for sufficient time to assure that this has happened and then shuts down the bus and master control clocks.

Because the core clock has been stopped, timing must be accomplished based on the external clock furnished to the system during this period. Counter circuitry dependent only on phase-lock-loop relock time is utilized to measure the time allowed for the phase-lock-loop circuitry to lock to the new frequency. At this point, the sequencer utilizes the new values furnished to effect a new value for the core (and other) frequency. After a safe lock period has passed ("relock time" stored in the master control register), the sequencer wakes the bus and master control units. The sequencer waits a few clocks of the slow frequency and then turns on the core clock and the DRAM interfaces.

Because the internal clocks of the system are shut down during the operation of the sequencer, it is necessary that the system provide a means of maintaining timing consistent with the normal world clock. Computer systems utilize a time stamp counter to keep track of world clock values. The value kept in this counter is utilized for certain operations conducted by the central processing unit. Once the phase-lock-loop circuitry of the frequency generator 17 has been stopped, the value in the time clock counter no longer represents accurate world time. Moreover, when the new frequency is reached and locks in, the rate at which the counter is iterated will change. To provide for accurate time stamp readings, a number of lower-valued bits indicating the last time of program execution held by the time stamp counter are stored. These are furnished to the control software along with the relock time value and the new frequency once the frequencies have restabilized to allow accurate computation of the normal world time.

Once the clocks have been turned on at the new frequencies, the control software ends its wait state and determines whether the operation was to decrease the frequency. Assuming the operation was to increase the frequency, the software then recalculates the time stamp counter value and checks the various interface timings to assure that they are correct. If the operation was to decrease the frequency, the control software causes the voltage to be lowered to the calculated value (either in one or a series of incremental steps) and then recalculates the value for the time stamp counter and checks the interface timings. At that point, the control software begins again to monitor the various conditions controlling the frequency and voltage of operation.

It should be noted that at some point during the monitoring operation it may be found that the processor is functioning at a normal frequency and voltage, that the temperature of operation is below some preselected value, and that a series of processor-intensive commands have been furnished to be executed by the processor. In such a case, these characteristics suggest that it may be desirable to increase the voltage and frequency of operation in order to handle these commands for a period less than would raise operating temperatures beyond a safe level.

In such a case, the control software may compute higher frequency and voltage values and a temperature (or a time within which temperature will not increase beyond a selected level) in order to cause the hardware to move to this higher frequency state of operation. In such a case, the processor executing the process illustrated effectively ramps up the frequency and voltage so that the processor "sprints" for a short time to accomplish the desired operations. This has the effect of allowing a

1 Claim 1. A method for controlling the operating condition of a
2 computer processor comprising the steps of:
3 determining a maximum allowable power consumption level from the
4 operating condition of the processor,
5 determining a maximum frequency which provides power not greater
6 than the allowable power consumption level,
7 determining a minimum voltage which allows operation at the maximum
8 frequency determined, and
9 dynamically changing the operating condition of the processor by
10 changing the frequency and voltage to the maximum frequency and
11 minimum voltage determined.

1 Claim 2. A computing device comprising:
2 a power supply furnishing selectable output voltages,
3 a clock frequency source,
4 a central processor including:
5 a processing unit for providing values indicative of operating
6 conditions of the central processor, and
7 a clock frequency generator receiving a clock frequency from the
8 clock frequency source and providing a selectable output clock
9 frequency to the processing unit; and

means for detecting the values indicative of operating conditions of the central processor and causing the power supply and clock frequency generator to furnish an output clock frequency and voltage level for the central processor.

Claim 3. A computing device as claimed in Claim 2 in which the means for detecting the values indicative of operating conditions of the central processor comprises control software for determining an output clock frequency and voltage level for the central processor adapted to conserve power while maintaining an effective execution rate.

Claim 4. A computing device as claimed in Claim 2 in which the clock frequency generator provides a plurality of selectable output clock frequencies, and the means for detecting the values indicative of operating conditions of the central processor causes the clock frequency generator to generate frequencies which are selected for optimum operation of a plurality of functional units of the computing device.

Claim 5. A method for controlling the power used by a computer comprising the steps of:

utilizing control software to measure the operating characteristics of a central processor of the computer,

determining when the operating characteristics of the central processor are significantly different than required by the operations being conducted, and

3 a clock frequency source,

4 a bus,

5 system memory,

6 a central processor including:

7 a processing unit for providing values indicative of operating
8 conditions of the central processor, and

9 a clock frequency generator receiving a clock frequency from the
10 clock frequency source and providing a selectable output clock
11 frequency to the processing unit; and

12 means for detecting the values indicative of operating conditions of the
13 central processor and causing the power supply and clock frequency
14 generator to furnish an output clock frequency and voltage level for the
15 central processor.

1 Claim 9. A computer as claimed in Claim 8 in which the means for
2 detecting the values indicative of operating conditions of the central
3 processor comprises control software for determining an output clock
4 frequency and voltage level for the central processor adapted to conserve
5 power while maintaining an effective execution rate.

1 Claim 10. A computing device as claimed in Claim 8 in which the clock
2 frequency generator provides a plurality of selectable output clock
3 frequencies, and

the means for detecting the values indicative of operating conditions of the central processor causes the clock frequency generator to generate frequencies which are selected for optimum operation of a plurality of functional units of the computing device including system memory.

Claim 11. A computing device as claimed in Claim 8 in which the clock frequency generator provides a plurality of selectable output clock frequencies, and

the means for detecting the values indicative of operating conditions of the central processor causes the clock frequency generator to generate frequencies which are selected for optimum operation of a plurality of functional units of the computing device including the bus.

[illegible]

5

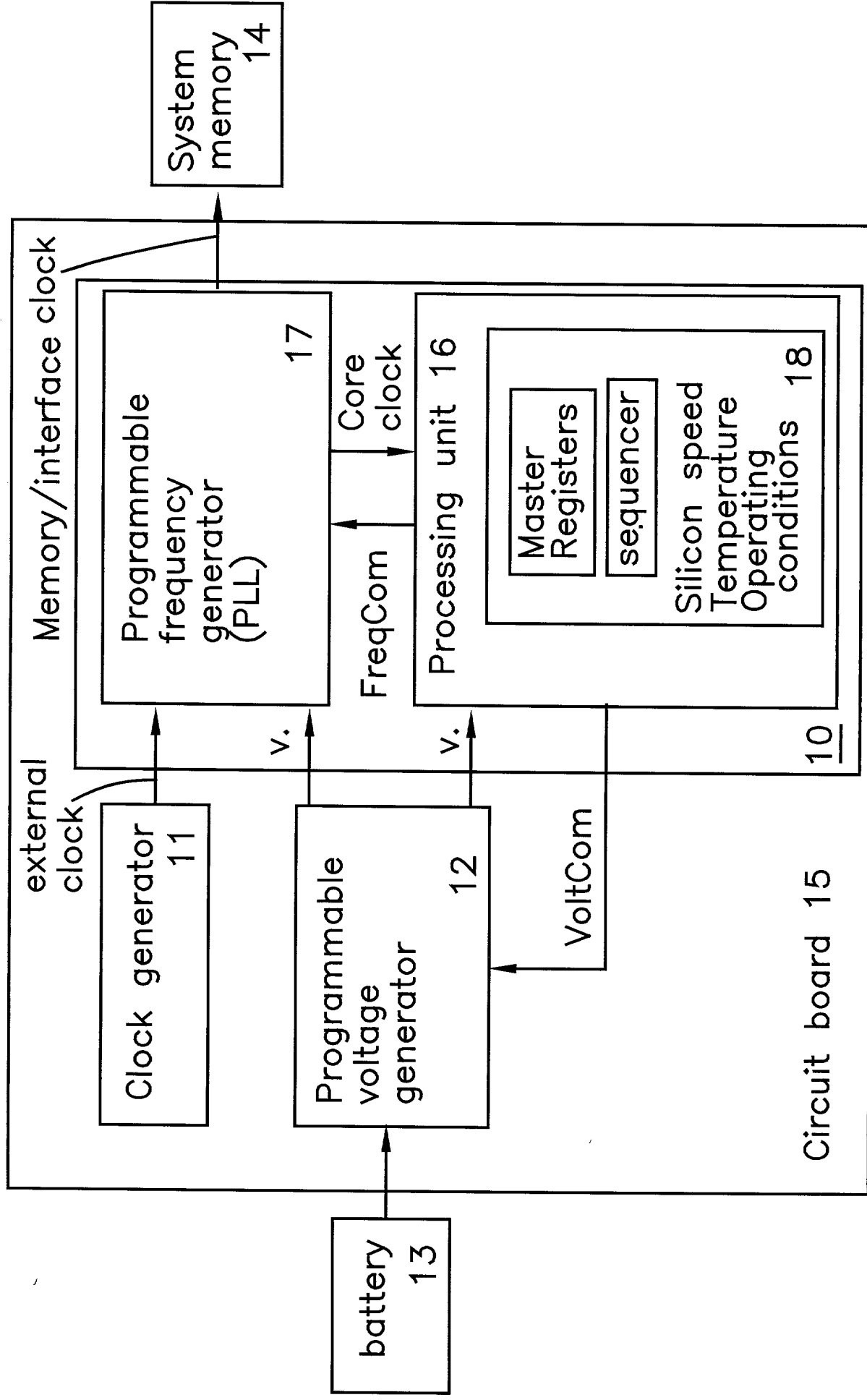


Figure 1

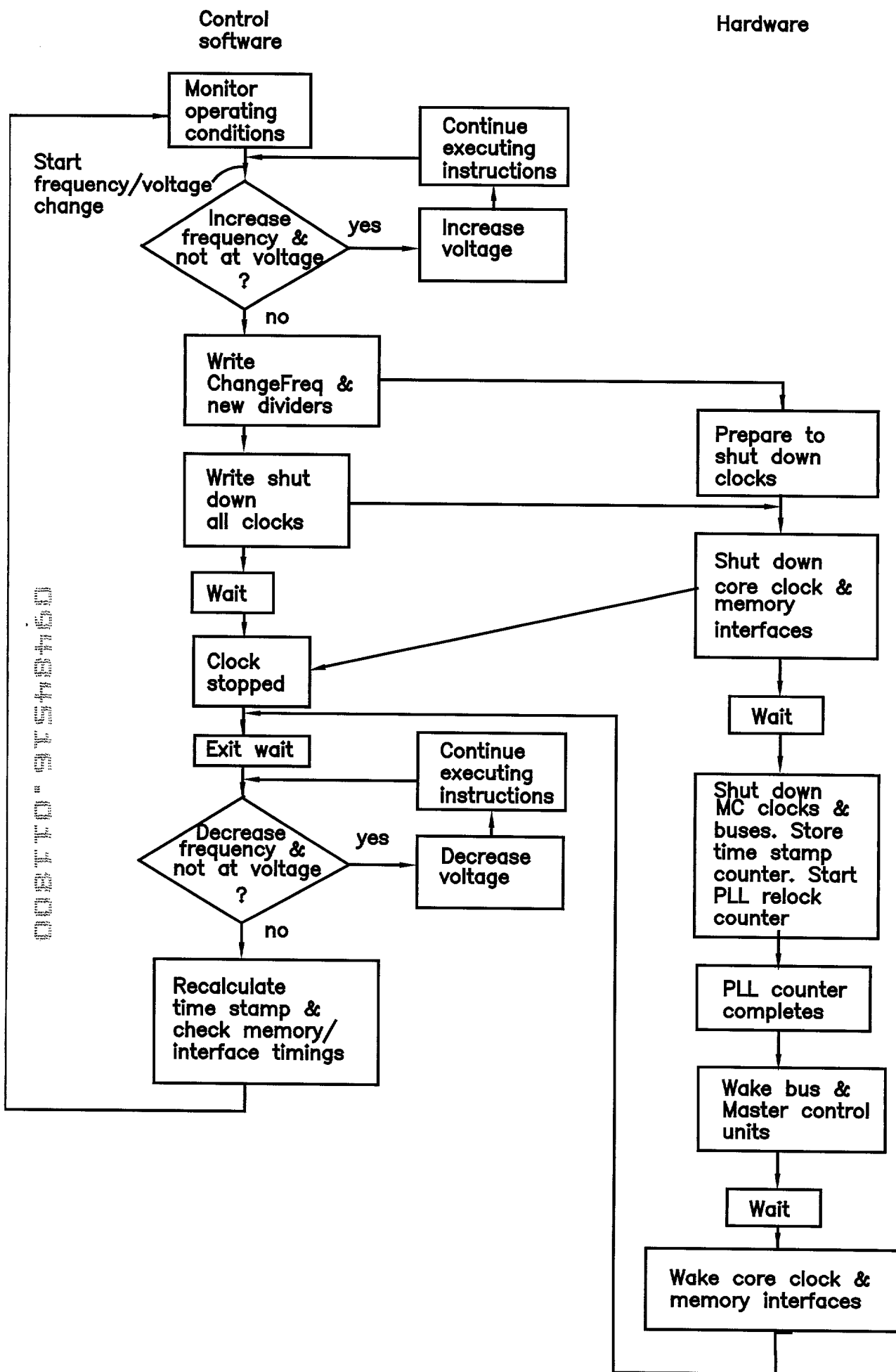


Figure 2

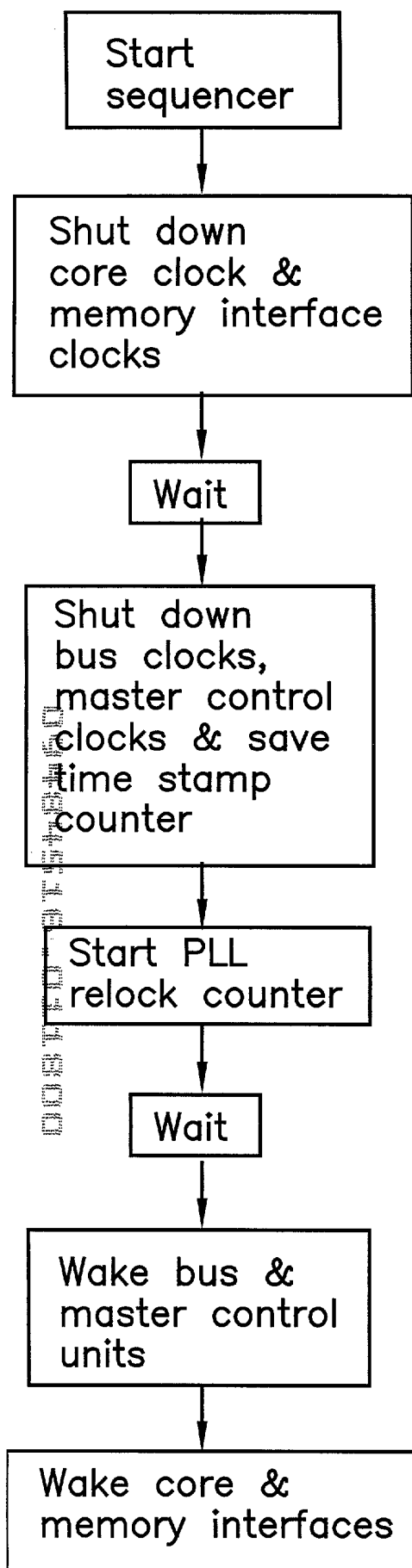


Figure 4

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first, and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first, and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

ADAPTIVE POWER CONTROL

the specification of which is attached hereto.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claim(s), as amended by any amendment referred to above. I do not know and do not believe that the claimed invention was ever known or used in the United States of America before my invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention thereof or more than one year prior to this application, that the same was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to this application, and that the invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of this application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months (for a utility patent application) or six months (for a design patent application) prior to this application.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby appoint Stephen L. King, Reg. No. 19,180; with offices located at 30 Sweetbay Road, Rancho Palos Verdes, California 90275, telephone (310) 377-5073, with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected herewith.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of

Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full Name of Sole/First Inventor Sameer Halepete

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Second/Joint Inventor H. Peter Anvin

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence San Jose, California Citizenship Sweden
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address 4390 Albany Dr #46
San Jose California 95129

Full Name of Third/Joint Inventor Zongjian Chen

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Fourth/Joint Inventor Godfrey P. D'Souza

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence San Jose, California Citizenship India
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address 298 S. 12th Street
San Jose, California 95112

Full Name of Fifth/Joint Inventor Marc Fleischmann

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Sixth/Joint Inventor Keith Klayman

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Seventh/Joint Inventor Thomas Lawrence

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____

Full Name of Eighth/Joint Inventor Andrew Read

Inventor's Signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____
(City, State) (Country)

Post Office Address _____